

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 00237 01 OF 03 121842Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SP-02 SAB-01 PM-03 INR-05
L-01 MCT-01 /034 W
-----121939Z 020740 /43
P 121733Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0331

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PANAMA 0237

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ, US
SUBJECT: JANUARY 9 INCIDENTS

REF: PANAMA 227

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF GOVERNOR'S "BACK CHANNEL" MESSAGE
REFERRED TO IN REFTEL. BEGIN QUOTE:
O120330Z JAN 77 ZFF-1
FM GOV PARFITT BALBOA HTS CZ
TO MR. VEYSEY ASA (CW), WASHDC
INFO ZEN/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
ZEN/AMERICAN AMBASSADOR PANAMA RP

CONFIDENTIAL PNA 059 EYES ONLY.
SUBJ: ACTIVITIES OF 9 JANUARY 1977

1. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS AN AMPLIFICATION OF
TELEPHONIC REPORTS GIVEN TO LTC CRITTENDEN BY LIEUTENANT
GOVERNOR HUNT ON 9 JANUARY 1977.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES OCCURING IN THE CANAL ZONE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PANAMA 00237 01 OF 03 121842Z

DURING THE 9 JANUARY 1977 OBSERVANCE OF THE 1964 RIOTS
ARE SET FORTH BELOW. ADVANCE INFORMATION INDICATED THAT
NO ORGANIZED LARGE-SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS AND INCURSIONS
INTO THE CANAL ZONE WOULD TAKE PLACE, BUT THE POSSIBILITY
THAT SMALL GROUPS, ACTING INDEPENDENTLY AND WITHOUT
APPROVAL OF THE GOP. CARRYING OUT SOME TOKEN DEMONSTRATIONS
WITHIN THE CANAL ZONE WAS NOT OVERLOOKED. THE

NATIONAL GUARD HAD INFORMED THE CANAL ZONE POLICE ON 3 JANUARY THAT THEY HAD INFORMATION THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE TENTATIVELY PLANNING TO CONDUCT SOME TYPE OF DEMONSTRATION ON 9 JANUARY, BUT HAD NO DETAILS AS TO THE SIZE OF THE DEMONSTRATION OR WHERE IT WOULD TAKE PLACE. THE GN ALSO REPORTED THEY HAD INFORMATION THAT A LEFTIST GROUP FROM ARRAIJAN MIGHT ATTEMPT A MARCH FROM ARRAIJAN TO PANAMA CITY VIA THATCHER HIGHWAY. THE NATIONAL GUARD PROMISED TO FURNISH ANY ADDITIONAL INTELLIGENCE THEY COULD DEVELOP ON THESE DEMONSTRATIONS AND GAVE ASSURANCES TO CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES THAT ANY ATTEMPTS BY DEMONSTRATORS TO ENTER THE CANAL ZONE WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD. ON 6 JANUARY, THE PANAMA NATIONAL GUARD G-2 INFORMED A MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER THAT THE NATIONAL GUARD HAD INFORMATION THAT A RADICAL AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEMENT WOULD MARCH INTO THE CANAL ZONE ALONG FOURTH OF JULY AVENUE ENROUTE TO THE AMADOR GUERRERO CEMETERY FOR THE COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONIES TO BE HELD THERE ON 9 JANUARY. THE GN G-2 STATED THAT HE HAD INFORMED THE CANAL ZONE POLICE OF THIS POSSIBILITY AND HE ASKED THAT THE MILITARY LIAISON CHANNEL BE USED TO INFORM THE U.S. AUTHORITIES IN THE CANAL ZONE OF THE PROPOSED MARCH ON FOURTH OF JULY AVENUE AND THAT THE U.S. AUTHORITIES IN THE CANAL ZONE PERMIT GN PATROL CARS TO "ESCORT" THIS MARCH. THE GN G-2 WAS INFORMED BY THE MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER THAT HIS REQUEST HAD BEEN PASSED TO CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES AND ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS OR COORDINATION SHOULD BE HANDLED DIRECTLY THROUGH CANAL ZONE POLICE LIAISON CHANNELS. CONTRARY TO THE GN G-2'S
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PANAMA 00237 01 OF 03 121842Z

STATEMENT THAT HE HAD INFORMED THE CANAL ZONE POLICE OF THE POSSIBLE MARCH, NO DIRECT CONTACT WAS EVER MADE BETWEEN THE PANAMA NATIONAL GUARD AND THE CANAL ZONE POLICE ON THIS SUBJECT. ON THE EVENING OF 7 JANUARY, WE INFORMED THE U.S. EMBASSY IN PANAMA OF THE GN REQUEST AND TOLD THEM THAT NO COORDINATION HAD BEEN EFFECTED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD WITH THE CANAL ZONE POLICE, BUT IF THE MARCHERS DID COME ON FOURTH OF JULY AVENUE, THE GN WOULD BE ALLOWED TO ESCORT THEM ALONG THIS ROUTE TOWARD THE CEMETERY. AS IN PAST YEARS AND IN ORDER TO AVOID PROVOCATION, THE CANAL ZONE POLICE MAINTAINED A LOW PROFILE ALONG THIS BOUNDARY STREET.

A. EARLY ON THE MORNING OF 9 JANUARY 1977, PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED RADIO STATIONS BEGAN BROADCASTING REENACTMENTS OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND OCCURRING DURING THE JANUARY 1964 RIOTS. LATER IN THE DAY, PANAMANIAN TELEVISION PICKED UP AND CONTINUED THIS THEME, ATTACKING THE CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES AND

RESIDENTS AND SHOWING SCENES OF THE 1964 DISTURBANCES.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 00237 02 OF 03 121851Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SP-02 SAB-01 PM-03 INR-05
L-01 MCT-01 /034 W
-----121938Z 020764 /43

P 121733Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0332

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 PANAMA 0237

STADIS////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

B. THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM GOT UNDERWAY AT ABOUT 0800R WITH A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY AT THE DON BOSCO CHURCH IN THE CALIDONIA SECTION OF PANAMA CITY. FROM THERE, THE MAJORITY OF THOSE ATTENDING PROCEEDED DOWN CENTRAL AVENUE TO THE AMADOR CUERRERO CEMETERY WHERE OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONIES WERE HELD. ENROUTE, A GROUP NUMBERING APPROXIMATELY 125 DIVERTED AND ENTERED THE CANAL ZONE ON SHALER ROAD AT 0920R, CUT ACROSS KENNEDY AVENUE AND UP THE SMALL INCLINE ALONGSIDE THE PARKING LOT OF THE OLD TIVOLI GUEST HOUSE. THIS GROUP, WHICH WAS UNDER ESCORT BY MOTORCYCLES OF THE PANAMA NATIONAL GUARD TRAFFIC SECTION, WAS HEADED BY ROBERTO GOMEZ, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE STUDENT FEDERATION OF PANAMA (FEP), AND INCLUDED NEWSPAPER AND TV PHOTOGRAPHERS, AS WELL AS SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS IN CIVILIAN DRESS WHO HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY CANAL ZONE POLICE PERSONNEL AS MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD G-2 SECTION. (NOTE: THE FEP IS A STUDENT ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ITS LEADERS ARE UNDER DIRECT CONTROL OF THE GN G-2.)

C. THIS GROUP PLACED PANAMANIAN FLAGS IN THE GROUND AND ON THE PARKING LOT FENCE, LAID SOME FLORAL WREATHS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PANAMA 00237 02 OF 03 121851Z

AND HELD A RALLY DURING WHICH ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS WERE CHANTED. IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE CANAL ZONE POLICE AND THE STUDENTS, ASSISTANCE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD WAS REQUESTED TO DIVERT THE STUDENTS BACK INTO PANAMA. AS THE RALLY ENDED, THE GROUP STARTED DOWN ROOSEVELT AVENUE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE ANCON HOUSING AREA AND AGAIN, THE CANAL ZONE POLICE REPEATEDLY URGED THE GN TO DIVERT THEM AND THE GN WAS INFORMED THAT THE DEMONSTRATORS WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE HOUSING AREA UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. A GN OFFICER ACCOMPANYING THE GROUP MADE A HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPT TO DIVERT THEM BACK ONTO KENNEDY AVENUE, BUT WAS TOLD BY GOMEZ THAT "THEY" WERE IN PANAMANIAN TERRITORY AND THE GN OFFICER'S INSTRUCTIONS WERE DISREGARDED. A GN OFFICER WAS AGAIN EMPHATICALLY INFORMED BY CANAL ZONE POLICE THAT THE MARCHERS WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO TRAVEL FURTHER INTO THE CANAL ZONE AND AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, THE GROUP CONTINUED ALONG MAMEI PLACE TO GORGAS ROAD TO REENTER PANAMA CITY VIA "J" STREET. THE GN OFFICER WAS INFORMED IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THE GROUP BE PERMITTED TO MAKE ANY DETOURS FROM THIS ROUTE AND HE WAS INFORMED THAT A CANAL ZONE POLICE SQUAD WAS STATIONED IN THE VICINITY OF THE ST. LUKE'S CHURCH TO PREVENT ANY ATTEMPT TO DIVERT UP GORGAS ROAD. AS THE GROUP PROCEEDED, THEY PAUSED IN FRONT OF THE ANCON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO PLANT ADDITIONAL PANAMANIAN FLAGS AND TO BURN A UNITED STATES FLAG. A PANAMANIAN FLAG WAS PLACED ATOP A LIGHT STANDARD AT THE GORGAS ROAD FOURTH OF JULY INTERSECTION. AT 0953R THE GROUP REENTERED PANAMA AT "J" STREET AND CONTINUED ON DOWN TO CENTRAL AVENUE.

D. AT ABOUT 1005R, A GROUP OF ABOUT 19 PERSONS, REPRESENTING A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION FROM ARRAIJAN, WAS OBSERVED WALKING ON THE WEST APPROACH OF THE THATCHER FERRY BRIDGE, CARRYING A LARGE PANAMANIAN FLAG AND THREE LARGE BANNERS DENOUNCING YANKEE IMPERIALISM. THE GROUP

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PANAMA 00237 02 OF 03 121851Z

PASSED OVER THE BRIDGE, PLACING SMALL PANAMANIAN FLAGS ON THE CYCLONE FENCE ON THE CENTER SPAN AND CONTINUED DOWN THE EAST APPROACH OF THE BRIDGE, ENTERING PANAMA CITY AT THE LIMITS ON AVENIDA "A".

E. AT APPROXIMATELY 1100R, THREE BUS LOADS OF STUDENTS FROM CHORRERA HEADING TOWARDS PANAMA CITY TURNED ONTO BRUJA ROAD AND PROCEEDED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE COCOLI TOWNSITE. ONE BUS STOPPED IN THE VICINITY OF THE OLD COCOLI CLUBHOUSE AND THE OTHERS CONTINUED ON TO CONTRACTORS HILL.

FLAGS WERE PLACED IN THE GROUND ALONG THE ROAD IN COCOLI AND AT CONTRACTORS HILL. A PAPER REPLICA OF A U.S. FLAG WAS BURNED AT COCOLI. AT ALL TIMES WHILE IN THE CANALA ZONE THE BUSES WERE UNDER ESCORT BY GN MOTOR PATROLS.

F. BY 1200R, ALL OF THE ACTIVITIES IN PANAMA CITY HAD TERMINATED AND THERE WERE NO FURTHER INCIDENTS DURING THE DAY.

G. THE ONLY INCIDENT OF INTEREST OCCURRING ON THE ATLANTIC SIDE TOOK PLACE AT ABOUT 0915R, WHEN A GROUP OF ABOUT 50 PERSONS, FOLLOWED BY TWO NATIONAL GUARD VEHICLES, MADE A SURPRISE ENTRY INTO THE CANAL ZONE AT 11TH STREET AND PROCEEDED A SHORT DISTANCE TO THE VICINITY OF THE FORMER CRISTOBAL FIRE STATION. THE GROUP HEARD A FEW BRIEF SPEECHES, SANG THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, SHOUTED THE USUAL ANTI-YANKEE EPITHETS AND RETURNED TO COLON AT 0930R. THE GN ZONE COMMANDER WAS ALSO PRESENT AND KEPT THE GROUP UNDER OBSERVATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 00237 03 OF 03 121900Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SP-02 SAB-01 PM-03 INR-05

L-01 MCT-01 /034 W

-----121938Z 020824 /43

P 121733Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0333

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 PANAMA 0237

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

H. TO PREVENT PROVOCATION AND POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION, NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO REMOVE THE PANAMANIAN FLAGS THAT HAD BEEN PLACED AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE CANAL ZONE UNTIL AFTER DARK. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED AND ALL FLAGS REMOVED BY 0045R, 10 JANUARY, IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT ABOUT 1200R ON 9 JANUARY, LTC NORIEGA, THE GN G-2 REQUESTED THROUGH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE LIAISON CHANNELS THAT THE CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES LEAVE THE PANAMANIAN FLAGS

IN PLACE THROUGHOUT THE FOLLOWING DAY, MONDAY, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR HIM TO "HANDLE THE STUDENTS." THIS REQUEST, OF COURSE, WAS IGNORED.

3. THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THE PANAMA NATIONAL GUARD KNEW IN ADVANCE THAT INCURSIONS WOULD BE MADE INTO THE CANAL ZONE AND THE GN PROBABLY ORCHESTRATED THEM. THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE ESCORTED BY GN UNITS, GN IN CIVILIAN DRESS WERE PRESENT IN THE GROUP AND THERE WAS EXTENSIVE PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE BY PANAMANIAN PRESS AND TV FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. A GN RADIO TRANSMISSION FROM GN CONTROL RELAYED TO FIELD UNITS THAT THE "PILGRIMAGE IS GOING TO ENTER THE CANAL ZONE." MILITARY INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT SHORTLY AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE GROUP FROM ANCON, A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PANAMA 00237 03 OF 03 121900Z

GN OFFICER IN THE VICINITY WAS OVERHEARD REPORTING TO GN HEADQUARTERS THAT THE ENTRY AND EXIT WAS SUCCESSFUL. MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ALSO REPORTS THAT ON 6 JANUARY, THE COMMANDER OF THE GN DETACHMENT IN CHORRERA PROPOSED TO A PARTIDO DEL PUEBLO (COMMUNIST PARTY OF PANAMA) CELL THAT FOLLOWING THE 9 JANUARY COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY IN CHORRERA, THE MEMBERS JOIN WITH THE PEOPLE OF CHORRERA AND GO TO PANAMA CITY TO "PLANT FLAGS IN THE ZONE."

4. I AM DEEPLY DISTURBED OVER THE NATIONAL GUARD'S INVOLVEMENT IN THESE ACTIVITIES AND OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PERMIT PANAMANIAN DEMONSTRATORS TO ENTER THE CANAL ZONE AND THE PUBLIC DESECRATION OF THE U.S. FLAG IN THE PRESENCE OF HIGH-RANKING GN OFFICERS (MAJORS GARRIDO AND FERRUFINO) AND UNIFORMED UNITS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD. GN ASSURANCES ABOUT KEEPING US INFORMED AND CONTROLLING DEMONSTRATORS WRE OBVIOUSLY NOT MADE IN GOOD FAITH. WHETHER OR NOT THE GN HOPED TO PROVOKE A CONFRONTATION WITH US. AUTHORITIES IS OPEN TO CONFECTURE; WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT WHATEVER THEIR OBJECTIVES, THEY ARE PLAYING A DANGEROUS GAME.

5. I FEEL THAT IF WE ALLOW THESE ACTIONS BY THE GN TO PASS UNCHALLENGED, WE ENCOURAGE FURTHER TESTS OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO PREVENT UNATURHORIZED AND PROVOCATIVE DEMONSTRATIONNS IN THE CANAL ZONE. I AM REQUESTING A FROMAL PROTEST, THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, OF THE EVENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE CANAL ZONE ON 9 JANAURY AND AM INFORMING THE NATIONAL GUARD THAT THE VALUE OF OUR ONGOING GN/C.Z. POLICE LIAISON PROGRAM IS UNDER CAREFUL REVIEW IN LIGHT OF THE APPARENT LACK OF COOPERATION AND CREDITBILITY ON THE PART OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AS BORNE OUT BY THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES. OBVIOUSLY THE

POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE HEIGHTENS WITH EACH SUCH INCIDENT.
WE HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY FORTUNATE IN BEING ABLE TO MAINTAIN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PANAMA 00237 03 OF 03 121900Z

CALM AND RESTRAINT THUS FAR. HOW LONG THIS CAN GO ON IS
CONJECTURAL.

6.I BELIEVE THE EXTEME SERIOUSNESS OF THESE DELIBERATE
ACTIONS OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT WARRANT TAKING STERN
MEASURES AT THE WASHINGTON LEVEL, PERHAPS THROUGH TREATY
NEGOTIATOR CHANNELS. WARM REGARDS. GDS1983. END QUOTE.
JORDEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, REPORTS, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PANAMA00237
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770012-0263
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770159/aaaabzjy.tel
Line Count: 348
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 985770da-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, STADIS
Reference: 77 PANAMA 227
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3615429
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JANUARY 9 INCIDENTS
TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/985770da-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009